

Worker Communism
Radical Conscience of the Left of Capital

(Part 1)

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Introduction

A political current's appearance and formation reflects the historical conditions which surround it. Marxism demonstrates the ascension of the working class as a social class - for the first time in human history, a class was formed that was able to carry out the Communist Revolution and end the exploitation of human beings by other human beings. The Communist parties organized in the Communist International were opposed to the Social Democratic Parties that had joined the camp of the bourgeoisie. "Council communism" was an idealistic response to the failure of the wave of world revolution. Left Communism was a reaction to the failure of the wave of world revolution in defence of Marxism and proletarian objectives. Stalinism showed the triumph of bourgeois counter-revolution over the ruins of the October Revolution. Trotskyism was also a mechanical reaction to the rise of counter-revolution, which, because of the limitations in its evolutionary process, was integrated into the left of capital. Maoism was a product of the crisis in the imperialist contra-revolution camp. Now the question is, "Worker Communism" appeared as a product of which historical conditions and in response to which requirements?

Two answers have been given to these questions. We will consider both of them.

The first answer, given by bigwigs and devotees of "Worker Communism", is that "Worker Communism" links back to Marx and is a continuation of Marxism. Ideologues of this tendency have tried for years to build a historical background to "Worker Communism" and to present it as a historical movement, a theoretical system with structural integrity and providing historical continuity. The theoretical coherence of a theory is a necessary condition but is not sufficient for its accuracy. However, a theoretical system such as "Worker Communism" which does not have internal consistency is no longer a Marxist theory but a set of positions and slogans that have been presented by the ideologues of the time; positions whose inconsistencies and affiliation with the 'left of capital' have been made clear over the course of history. Statements such as 'historical continuity' and 'return to Marx' have been used by the leaders of this movement in order to distort history.

The second response, offered by the critics of "Worker Communism", states that "Worker communism" is without root, a personality cult and a sect like "Mojahedin" within the left movement.

It is very obvious that none of these answers are correct or convincing. "Worker Communism" is neither a continuing and developing process of Marx and Marxism, nor is it without roots. "Worker Communism" is a product of Stalinism, and emerged as a Stalinist circle. It was strongly influenced and fed by Maoism during its formation and evolution, although the founding of "Worker Communism" stems from the crisis of the «current three» and the need to reintegrate it. Therefore, in order to defend Marxism we need to understand the formation of "Worker Communism"; this movement should be examined in the context of the development of social events, from the sympathizing with Azarakhsh ("Lightning") to the flourishing period of this movement and then on to the demise of the parties and the small

circles. If in the mid-1990s this political current was flourishing, by the end of the 1990s the current was beginning its demise, due to its internal contradictions.

Recently, the apostles of the French have been converted to the ideology of “Worker Communism” and announced that “Worker Communism” was first established in Iran, but will never be limited to the Middle East. As their Fuehrer declared, sooner or later the messages of the savior of humanity will conquer the West, Europe, America etc. In their message to the first congress of the Worker Communism Unity Party of Iran, these new apostles of the ideology of “Worker Communism” said:

“Worker-communism, as a movement of the working-class, is a world-wide product of the class struggle against capital. As a defined current, worker-communism was first established in Iran, but was never intended to be “middle-eastern”, but rather to express the needs of the class itself.

Reading Mansoor Hekmat’s writings closely, as far as they have been translated into English and other European languages, we can see many, many examples of the fact that he always considered that, sooner or later, worker-communist parties would rise in western countries, in Europe and in America. Building such worker-communist circles in various countries in Europe is a first step towards a party.

It is very important to understand, and then to make known, that worker-communism is not just a specialized branch of Marxism designed for middle-eastern issues ...Now, it’s time for worker-communism to land in western countries, to be set up as a communist answer to the western working-class issues.”[1]

Most religions (ideologies) were founded or created in the Middle East region. The Middle East was an establishing center for the Abrahamic religions and dozens of minor religions. The establishment of the religion of “Worker Communism” should also be considered in this way.

In early December 2011, just when the missionaries of “Worker Communism” had announced the foundation of the “Center of proletarian communism in the Arab world”, with plans for a large campaign in order to spread “Worker Communism” across the Arabic countries, a political explosion occurred in the “Hekmatist” party, a crisis that also drew in sister parties from Iraq. What distinguishes the current crisis is its “coup” and “anti-coup” form. The party was split in two, with both sides trying to gain the upper hand in terms of leadership, facilities and ideological propaganda, all the while blaming the other for disrespecting the boundaries of political conduct. Each wants to bring the other to the party’s court for the infringement of organization and party order. Sister parties in Iraq play the role of mediator between ‘coup’ and ‘anti-coup’. There seems to be no end to the tragedy within this ideology. We will come back to these issues later.

In order to evaluate this political current, it is important to look through its history step by step. The bare and extremely reactionary, anti-communist and bourgeois nature of this current in every part of society must be made clear. For example during its radicalism phase, it

enforced its role as the Marxism of the bourgeois in all social contexts. Through the manipulation of Stalinism and Maoism, this amalgam was put forward as pure communism under the name of “Worker Communism”.

In particular, at one point this political current tried to approach Left Communism, whilst deliberately hiding its contra-revolutionary nature. The obvious bourgeois nature of this current was criticized by the internationalists, and for this reason, the Italian section of the current, under the influence of Left Communism, began to criticize the positions of the current by publishing pamphlets publicly. As a result, Hamid Taghvaei, a member of the central committee of the Communist Party of Iran began his delirium and revealed the contra-revolutionary nature of his own current under the guise of a critique of the platform of the Internationalist Communist Party. This issue has led to the movement sometimes being mistakenly attributed to Left Communism (both in Iranian and non-Iranian political circles).

It was in this context that Babak Kasrayi, an adviser to the Central Committee of the Worker Communist party of Iran, in giving the reasons for his resignation, recently claimed “Worker Communism” as belonging to Left Communism (which it seems was criticised by Lenin about a hundred years ago), and he says:

“In general, ultra leftism (beyond the leftism) is probably the greatest plague of the whole tradition of “Worker Communism” in Iran and Iraq.

The indicator of this tendency is indifference and neglect of the traditions and struggles of the working class and the masses in general, and of their spirit and aspirations in each historical moment. Lenin, in his book ‘Left Communism: a disease of childhood’, is sharply critical of this tendency. It is interesting that many of the sympathizers to the positions of Mansoor Hekmat in Europe follow exactly the same tendency of ‘Left Communism’ that Lenin criticises.”[2] [Our translation]

Apparently, Babak Kasrayi is one of the central committee’s genius advisers who doesn’t know that "Lenin is an eatable and drinkable phenomenon!" [3] An adviser to the central committee of a party should have at least a basic knowledge of the history of his political current and his party, and shouldn’t need to refer to events from a hundred years ago, but rather simply to the 1980s and Hamid Taghvaei’s “Towards Socialism” No.2. All of these issues will be revisited in our text, and in particular we will respond paragraph by paragraph to Hamid Taghvaei’s delirious slander.

It is essential to note that we do not in any way criticise the political apparatus of the left of capital. The purpose of this text (which will be a series of articles), rather than criticizing “Worker Communism”, is to defend Marxism and proletarian goals and aspirations in the face of the left of capital.

Azarakhsh (“Lightning”)

The first political appearance of a circle that later became known as the «Marxist Circle for Worker’s Emancipation» can be traced back to students who were sympathizers of «Azarakhsh». «Azarakhsh» was a magazine for those sympathetic to the “Marxist – Leninist Mojahedin” [4], which was published abroad.

The circle held discussions on the “Marxist – Leninist Mojahedin” and in particular the positions of «Taghi Shahram» on issues such as liberalism, negation of the guerrilla movement etc. With the escalation of political developments in Iran, this circle also tried to form their views about the future of Iran. The first text produced by this circle is a pamphlet a few pages long entitled «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)», which was then distributed by the activists of «Azarakhsh». According to Hamid Taghvaei, the current leader of the Worker Communist party of Iran:

“A group called «Azarakhsh», a Marxist – Leninist current, had found us and liked our discussions. One of the leaders of this group suggested that we write down our discussions because he believed that they were different and interesting, and that it was necessary to put them on paper... They promised to publish the pamphlet (Theses) for us.” [5] [Our translation]

Years later, Mansoor Hekmat, when he was no longer a sympathizer of the group, despite having earlier been a ‘leader’, gave a speech to the Marx society in London entitled the Oral histories of the Unity of Communist Militants. In his speech he states that the pamphlet, «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)» was essentially written as a critique of «Azarakhsh»:

“At the same time a number of the split factions [of Mojahin] and current of «Tagi Shahram» and those that had been split from other groups, had established a current called «Azarakhsh» which had circles around the «Farhad Basharat». «Farhad» introduced this group and its positions to us and we wrote our pamphlet «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)» basically as a critique of «Azarakhsh».”[6] [Our translation]

It seems that Mansoor Hekmat thought that everyone had lost their historical memory and that he could manipulate history as he liked. Firstly, no traces of criticism of the «Azarakhsh» or Stalinist Mujahedin exist in «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)». Secondly, as we will see in the next section, this circle “correctly” insisted that the content of «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)» is in complete agreement with the views of the Stalinist Mojahedin. The history of this political current is full of such contradictions. We will return to the first Manifesto of this circle, «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)», in the next sections.

Sahand: sympathizer of the Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause

As previously described, the activists of the «Marxist Circle for Worker's Emancipation» considered themselves to be sympathetic to the Marxist – Leninist fraction of Mojahedi, and this circle was seen as one of the circles sympathetic to the Stalinist (Marxist – Leninist) Mojahedin. Therefore, the first edition of «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)» was published together with the statement and message of the Stalinist Mojahedin (Marxist – Leninist Mojahedin) and stressed that the theme and content of the thesis of the pamphlet «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)» was in full agreement with the positions of the Marxist – Leninist faction of Mojahedin. The introduction of the pamphlet states:

“The thesis outlined in this pamphlet, entitled ‘The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)’, is in full agreement with the basis of theories announced by the Marxist-Leninist faction of the People’s Mojahedin organization of Iran in their message to all revolutionary homeland forces, revolutionary democrats, revolutionaries, communists, in a declaration addressed to the militant workers and militant communists dating from November 1978.” [Our translation]

As a consequence of developments in society and the critical attitude of the Stalinist Mojahedin to the process of ideological change (the conversion of Mojahedin from Islam to Stalinism) the split faction of Mojahedin divided into groups: «Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause (Arman)» and «Battle of the emancipation of the working class (Nabard)» and also an organization called «Organization of the Struggle on the Path to the Emancipation of the Working class (Peykar)». The «Marxist Circle for Worker's Emancipation » considered themselves as sympathetic to the group «Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause (Arman)». The circle’s activists did not have any plans to operate independently and they agreed to be absorbed into this group. As Mansoor Hekmat said: “We started our job as the nucleus that would be taken in by the other organizations, we did not plan ahead.”[7] [Our translation]

Mansoor Hekmat referred to this issue again during the congress of the Unity of Communist Militants, but with one difference, as he was in the process of standing for the leadership position at the time. He stated that «Arman» would first accept the political positions of «Sahand» and then «Sahand» would join «Arman»!

“At that point, from an organizational point of view, we had anticipated the course of action for «Sahand». «Sahand» was a sympathizer of the «Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause (Arman)» and its action plan from an organizational perspective was first to present its positions, which «(Arman)» would then accept [and then] «Sahand» would join «(Arman)».”[8] [Our translation]

Soheila Sharifi, a current member of the central committee of the Worker-communist party of Iran emphasizes this again on page 29 of her book, a biography of Mansoor Hekmat, quoting him as saying:

“«Sahand» never had any intention of organizing and establishing a communist organization. They had no practice plans to recruit members or to organise their supporters. The main purpose, from the perspective of the Zhoobin [Mansoor Hekmat] and Hamid [Taghvai], was to strengthen the certain followers of the communist movement in Iran with their arguments, in the hope that these followers would be attracted by their discussions, which provided the basis for their work. They hoped then to gradually organize the activists of «Sahand».” [Our translation]

One question put forward is why the former «Marxist Circle for Worker's Emancipation» (later «Sahand») became sympathizers of the «Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause (Arman)» and not of «Nabard» or «Peykar»? In his speech entitled the Oral History of the Unity of Communist Militants at the Marx society in London on the 15th of May 2000, Mansoor Hekmat explained the renaming of the «Marxist Circle for Worker's Emancipation » to the «Sahand sympathizer to the Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause» thus:

“But why was «Sahand» sympathetic to the “Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause”? If you look at the end of the second edition of the pamphlet «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)», we first published it in November 1978 and signed it as a freedom circle in A4 format, without any supplement, and put it up in the Polytechnic university and the university of Tehran. Because we did not have any claim, we wanted to establish a group. We sat and considered all of the currents and organizations, which current was close to us and which considered the bourgeoisie as non-progressive? The only current that held this belief was the current of «Tagi Shaharam» and his comrades...«Arman» was the current that tried to continue the tradition of «Tagi Shaharam» and his political positions.

For this reason our sympathies were drawn to them, as we thought that they were the main branch of the left, even though «Arman» was made up of 20 people and at that point we were 6. Two or three months later «Arman»'s numbers increased to 21 people and ours to 60, but we were still their sympathizers. The first time I saw «Massoud Yacoby», he asked me “Why are you our sympathizers, because everyone asks us ‘who are they?’, and we answer, these are the people who support us!

In a sense, we remained sympathetic to them until the problem of the «Unity Conference for the emancipation of the working class» came up. And this highlights how we started our work without a plan, without an evaluation of the economy and society and, more than anything else, without any claim. In the early days, we would ask anyone we met how to establish a group.

As Jawad Gaedy was the deputy of the split faction of Mojahin, we thought that he must have extensive experience of organisation. Therefore we took him to our house, drew all the curtains and asked him “Dear Ahamad! (as his organizational name was Ahamad), how do we go about establishing an organization? He told us that if anyone know how to do so, we would not be in this situation!” [Our translation]

Current three and Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause (Arman)

After political events in Iran in 1979, the term «current three» was often applied to the Stalinist currents that were influenced by Maoism. Their ideas were close to the positions of the likes of «Enver Hoxha» and the Party of Labour of Albania. These included currents such as «Peykar», «Razmandegan», «Arman», «Nabard», «Vahdate Englabi» and others. The first important activity of «current three» was holding the «Unity conference for the emancipation of the working class», whose only real result was the establishment of the «Revolutionary unity for the emancipation of the working class» by some of the small circles who participated in it, based on a charter. Currents that represented the «current three» had the following characteristics in common:

- Rejection of the Soviet Union as a socialist camp and applying social-imperialism thesis to it (Thesis of Mao Tse-Don)
- Severe borders with the Tudeh party of Iran, as in Khrushchev's revisionism.
- Boundaries with the theory of "Three world", as in Chinese revisionism.
- Evaluation of the ruling mode of production of Iran's capitalism (dependent capitalism)
- Rejection of guerrilla strategy

The Revolutionary Organization of the Toilers of Iranian Kurdistan (Komala), which was formed as a Maoist current, became Stalinist during its evolutionary process, but still retained some Maoist influences. Therefore, this current was considered to be among the «current three». We will review this issue in the next sections. The «League of Iranian Communists» was not classified as «current three» as it assessed Iran as semi-feudal and semi-colonial, and did not have an interpretation of the theory of «three worlds». It was therefore out of the process of «unity conference for the emancipation of the working class» and was famous as a Maoist current.

«Sahand», as a sympathizer to the «Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause» was also considered as a part of «current three». But «Sahand»'s view of matters was that «current three» represented the mainstream of the communist movement and that «Arman» represented the left wing of «current three». So they considered themselves as belonging to the left-wing of «current three» (Stalinism). According to Mansoor Hekmat:

“We were close to «current three» and especially to the left wing of it. According to the available documents written about this current, we assessed «Arman» as representing the left wing. So, we as a circle first saw «current three» as the mainstream of the communist movement. We evaluated the left wing of it, the vanguard wing - the faction that had a more decisive position on the direction revolution and counterrevolution should take. Our idea was that «Sahand» would join this context of action as an intellectual current.”[9] [Our translation]

Since «Sahand» thought of themselves as belonging to the left-wing of «current three», they therefore considered it their duty to fight against “populism”, which was the main and most important deviation in the “communist” movement. «Sahand» was the symbol of the struggle

against “populism” within the Stalinist movement. In its first congress after being renamed “Unity of Communist Militants”, after several years of fighting against “populism”, it concluded that there should be a struggle against populism in the ranks of «Unity of Communist Militants» itself. Mansoor Hekmat, shortly after the first and only congress of «Unity of Communist Militants», highlighted “the deepest expression of the main characteristic of the populist style of work”. Majid Husseini, one of the former leaders of the Worker-communist party of Iran (former member of the political bureau) said after the first congress of «Unity of Communist Militants»:

“In the first congress of Unity of Communist Militants, the first confrontation of «worker communism» with the radical left and its periodic allies occurred between Mansoor Hekmat and Hamid Taghvai in the controversy surrounding populism with regards to communist work style... “being the deputy of the masses in the matter of revolution” was the formula that Hamid Taghvai considered as his main criticism of the populist style of work, a formula that Mansoor Hekmat called “the deepest expression of the main characteristic of the populist style of work...”. [10] [Our translation]

It is important to note that «Sahand» evaluated the Stalinist movement as a Communist Movement. The Communist explanation of the Stalinist movement will be discussed later. A few years later, in his report to the central committee of the Unity of Communist Militants at their first congress, Mansoor Hekmat claimed that Unity of Communist Militants had **deeply** criticized the «current three», and said:

“... from the beginning, Sahand condemned populism as a major and important deviation from the communist movement. But the important thing was that we thought that the fight against populism in the «current three» wouldn’t be so hard - we thought that the spectrum of «current three» would welcome our position, and that it would take the task of advancing these views into its own hands. As I said, we did not see the huge gap between us and «current three», and I can see now that this idea was mistaken. Our existence as the Unity of Communist Militants with the characteristics that define us, and the duties the group assumed so as to be able to distinguish itself clearly from and be deeply critical of the «current three», has not always been so clearly defined. The Unity of Communist Militants was the product of an evolutionary process.”[11] [Our translation]

The fact is that this ‘deep criticism’ of «current three» by the Unity of Communist Militants is nothing more than nonsense. When and where were the basic principles of «current three» criticized deeply? Not only have the basic principles of «current three» never been criticized by «Sahand» but since «Sahand» considered themselves as belonging to «current three» and because they were still a far cry from being the “Marx of the epoch” and “theoretician of the century”, they also tried to learn from the theories and experiences of the experienced currents of «current three». «Sahand» then clearly stated that they had learned much from the valuable research of its Stalinist comrades, Razmandegan, and would even recommend it to others:

“Primarily in a philosophical context, as we have done less work in this field, we can also benefit from the valuable text “Debate on the theory and practice” of our comrades

Razmandegan...(M.L) in the publication “The road of socialism” as it solicits a deep and explicit reaction to this aspect of the deviations of the Communist Movement. We recommend this article to comrades and sympathizers, regardless of some of the lack of clarity and problems that we have with it.”[12] [Our translation]

Sahand and the Anti-Imperialist Struggle

“Victory to the Anti-Imperialist struggle of the people of Iran!”

The above slogan is the final slogan of the pamphlet “«The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)»” written by the «Marxist Circle for Worker's Emancipation» in December 1978.

Before reviewing the content of this slogan and the pamphlets of the early circle, or «Sahand» as it would come to be known, it is better to see how Mansoor Hekmat reacted to the eventual translation of the texts of Unity of Communist Militants to foreign languages. He knew that the republishing, or worse, translation of the texts and pamphlets neither benefited himself nor his current, because these booklets have an extremely nationalistic perspective and offer an extremely reactionary concept of the proletariat and communism. He was, therefore, opposed to the translation, and he believed that these works should be left untouched. In a letter dated 7th of June 1988, Mansoor Hekmat writes to his brother Khosrow Davar (Shahin Razani, who later became one of the leaders of the communist party of Iran) about the translation of the texts of Unity of Communist Militants to foreign languages:

“A direct translation of any of our texts is not suitable for public release... The right way to proceed is by releasing these articles to foreign readers in a series of reviews (evaluations). Some direct quotes, in addition to explanations from the editor in amidst the text, and footnotes that can explain the issues of the time should be included...I don't agree with the direct translation of the works of Unity of Communist Militants without commentary and summary... Furthermore, our articles were not written for the European environment. Our discussions have been prepared for the level of understanding of the left movement of Iran.”[13] [Our translation]

However, Khosrow Davar (Shahin Razani), the brother of Mansoor Hekmat, one of the three main participators of the Unity of Communist Militants and the current manager of Mansoor Hekmat's website, had another idea about the content of these articles. He recommended replacing certain words with new concepts in order to understand their meaning. In other words, they should be interpreted. Furthermore, he believes that these articles should be written in **gold**, and so on Mansoor Hekmat's website it says:

“These articles are masterpieces of the communist literature of our epoch, and reading and re-reading them is strongly recommend to all. Indeed, editing and beautifying (replacing words with others) [the texts], do not do them justice, they should be written in gold. If you read

“humanism” instead of “people orientation” and “humanism” instead of “populism” you will get a feeling of the texts as they were first intended to be read.” [Our translation]

In his report to the first congress of the Unity of Communist Militants, Mansoor Hekmat stated that «Sahand» had condemned «populism» as a major and main deviation of the communist movement:

“From the beginning “Sahand” condemned populism as a major and important deviation of the communist movement.” [Our translation]

The basic question that immediately springs to the mind of every person seeking the truth is this: whose slogan is “Victory to the Anti-Imperialist struggle of the people of Iran!”? Where exactly had «Sahand» criticized “populism”? Most currents of «current three», including “Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause», the group that «Sahand» was sympathetic to, considered themselves militants of the Emancipation of the Working class , not «the people of Iran». None of them had «people» or «Iran» in their name. It would seem that «Sahand» was even more backward than the group that they sympathised with.

Another interesting point is that the term “people” was not just used by the radical phrase part of the left of capital, but also even by black currents of the capital entitled «The muslim people». For example, the student section of the party of Islamic Republic of Iran finished its statement about the Iranian student day, on 7th December 1979 with the following slogan: "Power to the Islamic and anti-imperialist struggles of the Muslim people of Iran!" [Our translation]

Simply remove the words ‘Islamic’ and ‘Muslim’ from the slogan of the party of Islamic Republic of Iran, and it could be “Sahand’s slogan . They are exactly the same. One current represented the religious current of the bourgeoisie and the other represented the secular faction of the bourgeoisie.

All the currents of the left of capital in 1979, including «current three», believed that an anti imperialist revolution in Iran had taken place and was still ongoing. In this context, the left of capital played an active role in the consolidation of the leadership of the clergy, and of course an anti-imperialist clergy![14] The logical consequence of the anti-imperialist revolution could be nothing other than a democratic revolution. «Marxist Circle for Worker's Emancipation » was also no exception, so in the pamphlet «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)» they stressed “The present revolution in Iran, despite the domination of capital, is a democratic revolution precisely because of its anti-imperialist character.”

Before continuing the discussion, a brief explanation of the concept of imperialism, anti-imperialist struggle and “social revolution” is necessary.

The left of capital has a concept more like the Kautskist understanding of imperialism and believes that imperialism is a major economic, military and repressive power such as the United States. Contrarily, the Marxist definition of imperialism is based on an understanding of world capitalism's descent into decadence. Imperialism is a way of life in the capitalist system during the period of decadence. Imperialism is not a specific policy carried out by any particular State, and can only exist on an international scale. We believe that in the decline period of capitalism, in the era of imperialism, all states regardless of their size, large or small, regardless of their military and economic power, from the larger gangsters like America and Great Britain to the smaller ones like Iran and Pakistan, are imperialists. [15]

In the era of social revolution and the epoch of proletarian revolution, «Communist Revolution» is possible as a wave of world revolution, as in the revolutionary period of 1917-1924. The condition for the continuation of the successful revolution is victorious revolution in other countries and its expansion towards world revolution, otherwise despite the memorable sacrifices and zeal such as in the «October Revolution», the successful revolution will be surrounded by world capitalism and its triumph will decline.

With these descriptions, we return to our main content.

Two years after the events of 1979, the anti-imperialist and in particular anti-American sentiment of the Unity of Communist Militants was still very strong. They bemoaned the proletariat who had not understood that in order for the Shah not to simply be replaced by the Americans, the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle and subservience to the “petty bourgeois leadership» in order to that after the downfall of Shah(king) it would not be America’s turn. We will now read the speech of Mansoor Hekmat, and someone who earned the title of «The epoch’s Marx»:

“One of the manifest aspects of our revolution has been its open anti-imperialist character. Imperialism in general and U.S imperialism, as the dominant imperialism on the politics and economy of Iran, in particular, has been a target of the Iranian revolutionary proletariat's protest. The boycott of oil to South Africa and Israel by the militant workers of the oil industry in the months prior to the Uprising, is [itself] expressive of the awareness of the Iranian revolutionary proletariat of global roots and foundations of exploitation and repression in Iran. Although the Iranian proletariat has to this very date been unable to fully understand the inevitable and fundamental link between imperialism and dictatorship, and hence the essential tie between the anti-imperialist struggle and the struggle for democracy, the anti-imperialist and particularly the anti-U.S. orientation of the Iranian workers and toilers have made, and is making, the restoration of the pre-revolutionary situation quite difficult for the wounded bourgeoisie of Iran.... They have by no means attempted nor let it become America's turn after the Shah, this being from the viewpoint of the monopoly bourgeoisie a giant stride "forward".”[16]

We believe that anti-imperialist struggle in the epoch of decadent capitalism means an anti-capitalist struggle around the world, including in our own country and own bourgeoisie, to destroy the capitalist system through World Revolution.

It is interesting that the Unity of Communist Militants admits to moribund of capitalism but believes that in the epoch of decadence of capitalism, it is toilers struggling against imperialism rather than the working class struggling against capitalism.

“The epoch of moribund capitalism and the epoch of revolutionary struggle of toiling masses of the world against imperialism.”[17]

“The escalation of the storm of anti-imperialist revolutions in the dominated countries and the increasing growth of Marxism-Leninism in these countries, have, inevitably, directed the attention of bourgeois economic science, which is the theoretical summation and generalisation of the interests of capital, towards the economic "ills" and "problems" of the "non-developed" countries.”[18]

Imperialism, in the decadence period of capitalism, is related to the redistribution of the global market and this includes all the countries in the world. In such circumstances the imperialist countries, whether they be big gangsters like America and Great Britain or small gangsters like Iran and Pakistan, are trying to undermine each other and take over the others' markets. It is a fact that small gangsters like Iran take a lower proportion of surplus value as compared to the big gangsters like the USA, but it is the same surplus value, namely the blood of the proletariat, that is sucked by a small gangster (small imperialist). In such circumstances «Sahand» called for an intensifying of the anti-imperialist struggle, and was not happy that the process and leadership of the democratic and anti-imperialist struggle was in the hands of the “petty bourgeoisie”. They wanted to create a revolutionary anti-imperialist front in order to gain full power over the democratic and anti-imperialist struggle.

“Substituting the policy of class collaboration for the endeavour to form, in practice, a revolutionary anti-imperialist front, is not effective enough in exposing the liberal bourgeoisie and the conservative section of the petty bourgeoisie, and consequently abandoning the political leadership of the democratic struggles into the hands of the petty bourgeoisie, the liberal bourgeoisie, etc, are all, from the theoretical aspect, reflections of the immense gulf which separates "revolutionary" theory in Iran from the teachings of Marx and Lenin on the criticism of the economy of capitalism and its highest stage, imperialism.”[19]

«Unity of Communist Militants», through the intensity of the quest for democracy and the anti-imperialist struggle, sees itself as a lawyer for the proletariat, and states that the proletariat supports any democratic and anti-imperialist movement that stands against the existing order in a revolutionary manner. We have repeatedly emphasized the techniques used by the left of capital to sterilize and overshadow the anti-capitalist struggles. The efforts of the left of capital in atomizing the proletariat and their integration in the struggle for democracy is not limited to the traditional wing of the left of capital; even the most radical phrase sections

of the left of capital have adhered to this tradition, including the Unity of Communist Militants.

“So we’ll announce that the revolutionary proletariat supports any democratic anti-imperialist movement that in a revolutionary manner struggles against the existing system.”[20] [Our translation]

The founding of the, as they saw it, ‘only communist party in the world’, namely the «[anti] communist party of Iran» by the Unity of Communist Militants and Komala in the liberated areas, following the style and ideology of Maoism, did not prevent the prior Unity of Communist Militants and the next [anti] communist party of Iran from abandoning the anti-imperialist struggles. However it was stated that the minimum program of the proletariat is an anti-imperialist program too:

“So the minimum program of the proletariat economically and politically is an anti-imperialist program.”[21] [Our translation]

The petty bourgeois Khomeini

During the anti-capitalist struggles of 1979, in the guise of anti-imperialist struggle, the left of capital played an important role in the consolidation of the leadership of the clergy, of course an anti-imperialist clergy, and consequently played an active role in bringing the struggles of the working class to a dead-end. This time the «Marxist Circle for Worker's Emancipation» (or later «Sahand») could not play any role but their position was consistent with the other currents of the left of capital. According to the beliefs of this circle at the time, other classes, not simply the working class, were demanding revolutionary developments in society. They named the other classes as the following:

- Peasants.
- The disintegrating urban petty bourgeoisie.
- ...

Since our “theoreticians” were too ashamed to clearly set the “national bourgeoisie” as a class apart, they represented it with three separate points instead. We can look at parts of the first manifesto namely the pamphlet «The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)» (for which the author later earned the title “The Marx of the epoch”):

“On the other hand, the same ruling imperialist relation has provided the objective conditions for the existence of other revolutionary classes (peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie in disintegration,...) who have interests in the overthrow of imperialism and the elimination of its intense exploitation and fierce dictatorship, and who resort to revolutionary methods of struggle against the existing system. Hence the working class is not the only class demanding revolutionary changes in the present revolution of Iran...Therefore the revolution in Iran is

democratic since the ruling imperialist system in the dominated Iran has given a democratic content to the Iranian revolution, from the point of view of the objective conditions (intense economic exploitation and violent political repression of the working class and other toiling classes: peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie...) and also from the point of view of the subjective conditions (the presence of classes alongside the working class - mainly the peasants - prepared, as a result of the objective conditions of their social existence, to accept revolutionary methods of struggle against the existing system).”[22]

So the four-class theory of the «Marxist Circle for Worker's Emancipation» was completed and the circle announced its manifesto as Maoist theory (four-class). We can continue our research into the texts of this circle in order to find more information about the revolutionary class of “petty bourgeois” which was important in helping eliminate the extreme exploitation of the proletariat, and we will review who the “petty bourgeois class” was made up of.

“The conciliatory petty-bourgeois leadership whose revolutionism was to become void of any kind of content with the downfall of the monarchical regime... This political force could only be the petty-bourgeois current which had, until the compromise, the leadership of the movement in its hand, namely the clergy with Ayatollah Khomeini at its head; a force which completely took hold of the bridle of the petty-bourgeoisie and in particular its traditional section.”[23]

The clergy, regardless of their religion (Islam, Christianity, etc), are, as a part of ideologues of the class system, similar to the journalists whose task it is to engineer public opinion as a part of the capitalist superstructure. Our theoretician complains that the clergy, just like a part of the superstructure of the capitalist state, think only of power, and not of their responsibility to the “revolutionary petty-bourgeois class”.

“Khomeini, who owes his respectability among the masses not to Islamic jurisprudence but to his active presence in anti-monarchist struggles, himself only adores establishing Velayat-e-Faghih [Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists] and attaining a privileged position for the clergy in the hierarchy of power.”[24]

The Unity of Communist Militants denigrated the leader of Iranian bourgeoisie, Khomeini, and also the clergy of the petty bourgeoisie, but at the same time they believed that the petty bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class. The logical consequence of this reasoning would be that the leader of the bourgeoisie and a criminal such as Khomeini was a revolutionary. At the same time, in February 1979, Internationalists began to analyze the situation, relying on Communist positions and Internationalist perspectives. Unlike the political folly of the left of capital that created a “petty bourgeois leader” from a reactionary like Khomeini, made the clergy anti-imperialist and then declared the same «petty bourgeois» class a revolutionary class, the internationalists declared in February 1979 that Khomeini was no more progressive than the Queen of England or the first emperor Bokassa.[25]

The suppression of any kind of social protest, and especially the oppression of the anti-capitalist struggle of the proletariat and the brutal massacres around the country, especially in Kurdistan, did not prevent the Unity of Communist Militants from regarding Khomeini's social position as having become 'petty bourgeois', and they even regarded him as the "leader of the petty bourgeoisie".

"Therefore monopoly capital and the petty-bourgeois leadership both took a new step forward in the same direction... Right here we must emphasize that the extent to which the clergy and in particular Ayatollah Khomeini himself are aware of their instrumental role in the service of the suppression of the revolution and re-establishment of the indisputable sway of monopoly capital, is by no means a determining factor." [26]

The Unity of Communist Militants obstinately insisted on a "petty bourgeois leadership", whilst at the same time pointing to the bourgeois state. The Unity of Communist Militants apparently believed that the bourgeoisie of Iran was contra-revolutionary and was not capable of leading itself, thus the counter revolution bourgeoisie appealed to the petty bourgeoisie, a revolutionary class, to lead the bourgeois class. How a revolutionary class (the petty bourgeoisie from the perspective of the Unity of Communist Militants) could lead the counter revolutionary bourgeois, with their different class demands, is a mystery. Mansoor Hekmat states:

"It is clear that such was the stagnation of the revolutionary struggles of toilers, that they were not only unable to realize their economic and political demands, but were also now looking to the petty-bourgeois leadership and the government of the bourgeoisie in the hopes that they would fulfill their demands." [27] [Our translation]

Something that was mere mystery for us in the world of Unity of Communist Militants could however become reality. As the new era bourgeoisie was unable to lead its own class movement, the Unity of Communist Militants believed that with the influence of petty bourgeois leadership, the state machine, having broken down because of the people's protests prior to 1979, could be made to move forward again.

"But with the arrival of the new era, although temporary, the bourgeoisie politicians, thanks to the influence and domination of the revolutionary movement led by the petty bourgeoisie, were able to achieve something that the state machine of the King (Shah) had been unable to do, even with all the resources at its disposal." [28] [Our translation]

Repression became more widespread, and only two months remained until the bloodiest massacres in the modern history of Iran. The bourgeoisie villains declared that there were to be no 'wounded', and that the soldiers should just 'kill in the street'. In such circumstances, in April 1981, the Unity of Communist Militants had the only communist program in the world still obstinately calling for a "petty-bourgeois leadership". We can take a look at a paragraph from this program:

“The current democratic revolution in Iran was formed in the context of the economic crisis of 1976. In the first stages of the February revolt, the monarchic regime, the defender of exploitation and reactionary imperialism, was taken down. Subsequently, mainly because of the lack of independent ranks of the proletariat and the lack of leadership provided by the socialist proletariat in the revolutionary movement, the leadership of the movement became available to petty-bourgeois and liberal bourgeois forces which, before the rise, were demanding the protection of the bourgeois state machine from the impacts of the revolution and the maintaining of the base rule of the capital of Iran.” [Our translation]

Unlike the demagoguery of the left of capital, from pro-USSR to the radical phrase such as the Unity of Communist Militants, the internationalists announced that the proletariat must maintain its class independence and should not involve itself in the people's movements. In the same February, Internationalists announced that the only revolution on the agenda, both in peripheral countries including Iran and metropolis countries, was Communist Revolution.[29]

Issues in the next part:

- Changing the name of «Sahand» to the«Unity of Communist Militants»
- The Marxist-Leninist ideology of the «Unity of Communist Militants»
- The country of the «Unity of Communist Militants»
- «Unity of Communist Militants» and the Iranian “communist” movement
- «Unity of Communist Militants» and the theocratic faction of the bourgeoisie

To Be Continued

M. Jahangiry

1 January 2012

Notes:

[1] Message of Worker-communism Initiative (France, Belgium), to the first congress of Worker-communism Unity Party, Iran, 20 February 2011

[2] Resigned from membership in the Worker Communist Party of Iran, Babak Kasrayi, a former adviser to the central committee, 24 March 2011

[3] The Fuhrer of “Worker Communism”, Mansoor Hekmat in his article “Goodbye, comrade” on 20 April 1999, touching precious gold as this: “Thousands honorable man rounding up to the party that they don’t know Lenin is eatable or drinking [phenomena] and Marxists and senior workers in the party should not indicate this as their less esteem but see that their own success.”

[4] Under the influence of guerrilla movements and also liberation movements such as Palestinian, Dhofar etc, two organizations started guerrilla activities in Iran in the early years of the 1970s. The first was a Stalinist current called «Organization of Iranian People's Fedayee Guerrillas». The second was a religious current called «Organization of Iranian People's Mojahedin», which was influenced by Stalinism and liberation movements. With the intensifying of Stalinist-Maoist movements and also national liberation movements which often were combined with the ideology of Stalinism, in this current Stalinism dominated Islam, which is known as a process of ideological change.

During the process of ideological change in the «Organization of Iranian People's Mojahedin» in the years 1973-1975 the vast majority of the members of the organization were converted from Islamic ideology to Stalinism. «Tagi Shahram», one of the members of the central committee of Mojahedin, played a major role in this process. The conversion of Mojahedin to Stalinism was also performed with the same Stalinist tradition and style, and took place as a bloody coup. Death squads on 6th May 1975 assassinated the Mojahedin who were not willing to convert from Islam to Stalinism in the streets of Tehran (Abozar Jomhuri), like in Hollywood movies. On October 1975 the Organization of Iranian People's Mojahedin published a book called «Declaration of ideological positions of Organization of Iranian People's Mojahedin» and announced that the ideology of the organization had been changed from Islam to «Marxism-Leninism». It is essential to note that this current later rejected the guerrilla strategy. The causes of denial of the guerrilla movement will not be discussed here.

The occurrence of the Stalinist coup in the Organization of Iranian People's Mojahedin is often related to the dictatorial character of the «Tagi Shahram», which is however a very superficial approach. The occurrence of a bloody coup, such as in the Mojahedin, was a reflection of the Stalinist tradition. Furthermore «Tagi Shahram» was a “theoretical” figure and he introduced the term of «the monotheistic classless society». He had an impressive personality, and was able to influence his officer guard «Amir Hossein Ahmadin» and escape with plenty of weapons and ammunition on 5th May 1973 with other political prisoners from a prison in Sari, to then go to the central committee of the Mojahedin.

In the late autumn of 1978, the Stalinist Mujahedin were split into two small groups and an organization:

- «Alliance for struggle for Working Class Cause (Arman)»
- «Battle of the emancipation of the working class (Nabard)»
- « Organisation of Struggle on the Path to the Emancipation of the Working class (Peykar)»

[5] Biography of Mansoor Hekmat written by Soheila Sharifi page 24

[6] Mansoor Hekmat, speech in Marx society in London entitled as the oral histories of unity of communist militants, 15th May 2000

[7] As above

[8] Report by Mansoor Hekamt of the central committee of the Unity of Communist Militants to the first congress of the Unity of Communist Militants, “Toward Socialism” No: 5 pages 8 and 9

[9] As above page 9

[10] Evaluation of battles and branches of the worker communism in Iran, part 3, Majid Hosseini, 18th January 2008

[11] Report by Mansoor Hekamt of the central committee of the Unity of Communist Militants to the first congress of the Unity of Communist Militants, “Toward Socialism” No: 5 page 10

[12] Three sources and three components of populism socialism of Iran by Mansoor Hekmat

[13] Handwritings of Mansoor Hekamt, published on the website of the Mansoor Hekmat Foundation.

[14] For more information about the role of the left of capital in the consolidation of the leadership of the clergy, refer to the article «Developments of 1979, a view of the positions of the left of capital and internationalists» published on the website of Internationalist Voice.

[15] About the concept of imperialism in the era of capitalist decline, refer to the second and third part of the article, “Nationalism is a deadly poison for the class struggle” published on the website of Internationalist Voice.

[16] Two Factions within the Bourgeois-Imperialist Counter-Revolution, part 3

[17] Two Factions within the Bourgeois-Imperialist Counter-Revolution, part 2

[18] The Myth of the National and Progressive Bourgeoisie

[19] As above

[20] Program of the unity of communist militants

[21] Program of the communist party of Iran

[22] The Iranian revolution and the role of the proletariat (Theses)

[23] Two Factions within the Bourgeois-Imperialist Counter-Revolution, part one

[24] Two Factions within the Bourgeois-Imperialist Counter-Revolution, part two

[25] Look at article, Developments of 1979, a view of the positions of the left of capital and internationalists and even the statement of the International Communist Current (1979) published on the website of Internationalist Voice.

[26] Two Factions within the Bourgeois-Imperialist Counter-Revolution, part one

[27] Prospects of adversity and new advancement of revolution thesis about the political importance of the economic crisis.

[28] Introduction of the pamphlet of Prospects of adversity and new advancement of revolution thesis about the political importance of the economic crisis.

[29] As source 25